

LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 1010
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

A Handbook for Amateur Magicians

GEORGE MELBURN

STEPHEN D MYERS

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George Milburn

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A HANDBOOK FOR AMATEUR MAGICIANS

INTRODUCTION

The Fascination of Magic: Down through the ages trickery, which goes by the name of magic, has been used to fascinate and bewilder. Nowadays every itinerant Tom show has its between-acts sleight-of-hand performer to hold the audience's attention while Little Eva is being hauled down from the flies and the stage is being set for the big bloodhound ice-crossing scene. And on the vaudeville programs the moustached, dress-suited *prestidigitateur* with his Chinese linking rings and his Hindu water bowls still holds his own with the Japanese tumblers and the flying trapeze artists for the closing number. But magic has not always been the light and entertaining business it is today. Cruel religion has had for its very corner stone the ability of certain deft fingered messiahs to gull credulous populaces with feats which men called inexplicable and therefore divine.

So, since before the dawn of history, men have been intrigued by dexterous and crafty illusions, by deceptive and puzzling artifices, by results, which, failing to explain through reason, they sought to account for through the supernatural.

In later years a number of notable men have devoted their lives to the art of entertaining with legerdemain. Ingenious, complicated mechanical contrivances have been invented to daz-

zle and delight audiences. A great many large books of instructions have been written and a whole separate group of entertainers has come up. And out of this smear of invention and experimentation have come a few simple tricks, some depending upon elementary mathematical formulas for their illusions, others upon some uninvolved chemical phenomena, and yet others upon some homely apparatus. And to the fire-side group of friends the outcomes of these unpretentious feats prove quite as baffling, quite as amusing, as those marvelous effects produced by the sleek mystery man of the theater.

So it is for the parlor and after-dinner entertainer that this book of magic tricks has been written—a handbook for amateurs. No effort has been made to be original. Every person versed in magic at all will recognize these tricks as the most rudimentary ones. An attempt has been made to be terse and lucid in the descriptions and directions. And, more than all, every effort has been made to avoid the involved, expensive apparatus of the professional and the tricks that require long hours of practice at sleight of hand.

While the reader will find these recipes for deception as complete as it has been possible to put them on paper, there are several preliminary instructions which he will do well to have in mind before he sets out to baffle an audience of intelligent and observant people. These may be summarized as follows:

- (1) *Never* tell your audience beforehand what you intend to do. To do so not only heightens the chances of detection, but it less-

ens the effect as well. *Always keep them guessing.* Wherever it has been thought practicable instructions for any announcements to be made have been included.

(2) *Never* set out to entertain an audience for any length of time without having injected some variety into your repertory. Do not devote your attention to card tricks alone. Select two or three good card tricks, a coin trick that appeals to you, a handkerchief illusion and one with dice. Nearly everyone knows a trick of some sort. You have an opportunity to be exceptional and know several. Keep in mind the line about variety being the spice, *et cetera*.

(3) *Never* perform a trick the second time during the same entertainment or before the same spectators. No matter how much your friends may wheedle, remain steadfast on this point. Familiarity breeds contempt and half the fascination of a trick relies solely on its novelty.

(4) *Never*, when performing before a company of any size, let your audience get too familiar with you. There is always likely to be one, actuated by a spirit of jealousy, who will be anxious to turn your successful tricks to failure. Select a few which you are sure of for your beginning, and squelch any person who gets too forward. To be sure, good natured badinage is all right and may even be encouraged. But discourage any attempt to crowd you out of the limelight. You have the center of the stage for the moment and be firm in defending your right to occupy it.

(5) In selecting a place before the company,

take care to get a position which will place the lights in front of you and no lights behind you. The necessity for this will be obvious after you have read some of the illusions described. If possible try to have a place which will put you some six inches above your audience's floor level.

(6) Accustom yourself to look at your audience and not at your hands while doing a trick. As far as possible, it is well to keep up a running line of conversation, or "patter" as the professionals have it.

Patter: The entertainment value of your tricks will be enhanced immeasurably by this stream of fluffy banter and airy wise-cracks. There are those skillful magicians who can win applause with "dumb-show" but the trickster who can make his audience laugh has half succeeded at the start. Such light conversation (albeit one-sided) will divert your audience's attention from your movements, but it will not detract in the slightest from the final eye-opening finish. More important than these things, such practice will give you a stage presence¹ which will prove invaluable on other occasions. Any humorous magazine should furnish you with a supply of epigrams and short jokes adaptable to the tricks described in this book. Memorize a few of these and practice them in private with the tricks they are to be used with, talking aloud in an easy, bantering tone. Such patter will increase twofold your popularity as an entertainer. Will Rogers, possibly

¹*How to Talk and Debate* (Little Blue Book No. 988).

the most popular of all contemporary comedians, owes his success to the fact that while he does marvelous things with a twirling rope he can at the same time elicit gales of laughter with his droll witticisms. The following line of "patter" which I have prepared for the egg laying bandanna deception (described under Handkerchief Tricks) should prove a model:

. . . Well, ladies and gentlemen, here we have a little doily (Shaking out the bandanna) which was presented to me recently by the Sultan of Swat. But this small nose napkin—which you will observe is quite empty—(Shaking it vigorously, folding it up, beating it about) is really a remarkable thing. A great many royal nostrils have been tooted in this little square of Irish linen, but that's not the strangest thing about it. More marvelous than that is the fact that this is a *magic* hanky—the one that busted the egg trust, settled once and for all the old question—which was the first, the hen or the egg?—drove all the big butter and egg men dippy, sent the old white leghorn rooster into epileptics and (Now taking the bandanna up in a fold to perform the trick) drove all the lady leghorns to an early grave—*Kut-kut-kut-ka-dah-kut!* (Imitating hen's cackle in a falsetto voice. Shaking one leg and allowing the egg to drop in the hat)—when they tried to compete with it. Really an extraordinary handkerchief, and (Shaking it out again) absolutely devoid of any extraneous matter as you will observe, being an observant sort. You know (Once more taking up a fold in the handkerchief to perform the trick) it all reminds me of the story—*kut-kut-kut!*—about the magician who called the little boy up on the stage and asked him, "Little boy, do your mother's hens lay eggs?" And the little boy said, "No." The magician was surprised and said, "What! her hens don't lay eggs!" *Kut-kut-kut!* (Again imitating hen's cackle and shaking leg) "And how do you account for the fact that your mother's hens don't lay eggs, young man?" "She keeps ducks," replied the little boy.—*Ka-dah-kut!* (Once more imitating hen and allowing egg

to roll from handkerchief.) Yes, an exceptional little piece of fancy work (Again displaying empty handkerchief). The eggs it lays can't be beat—they're hardboiled. But there's just one disagreeable thing about the cackleberries this little cotton biddy lays (Again taking up handkerchief and imitating hen's cackle in high falsetto)—these eggs are all cowardly eggs—you know *cowardly* eggs—the kind of an egg that'll hit you and run—(Allowing egg to drop into hat)—but that may be well enough, too, because if I ever get everything coming my way, why then I'll have a few things to throw back! (Shaking out the empty handkerchief once more.) But you understand, ladies and those who chase after you, I could go on cackling here—that's the only thing this little marvel *doesn't* do that's being done in the best regulated hen houses—she simply *refuses* to cackle—so modest and unassuming, y'know—But I could go on having this magic hanky turn out hen fruit for you until morning. But that's the greatest difference between Hamlet and omelette, you know (folding up bandanna and tucking it in breast pocket)—the same difference there is between Freud and fried eggs—and besides it wouldn't be doing the right thing by our Hennery. But the strangest thing about it all is that you let me stand here and cackle out eggs for half an hour, and yet, and yet, you've let them get away from you before your very eyes (turning up empty hat). But anything is possible with magic eggs. They're simply not to be trusted. . . .

Apparatus: As has been stated before, in selecting the material for this book deliberate care was taken to avoid tricks complicated with sleight of hand and ones which required elaborate apparatus. Few of the tricks set down in this book will call for any specially prepared device whatever. Those recommended are of the simplest design, easily fashioned from materials available to everyone. If the entertainer will furnish himself with a deck of cards, some

common beeswax, a small pill box, a dark table cover, some lengths of black thread, an ordinary nest egg, a bandanna handkerchief and a few other such inexpensive accessories, he will be ready to take up the task of amusing others. No stupendous illusions will be wrought with the simple directions given here, it is true, but if these tricks will beguile a few tedious hours they will have been worth their while.

CARD TRICKS

The amateur magician's boon is an ordinary pack of playing cards. Always easily available, cards may be used to entertain and amuse folks by the hour. The following tricks have been selected for the mathematical precision of their results, and while no particular skill is required for their success, the effects accomplished are none the less baffling to those who do not have the key.

Two Methods of Discovery: (1) Deal the cards face-up into three packs and request an onlooker to note a card and remember which heap it is in. When 21 cards have been dealt, toss the rest aside. Ask in which heap the chosen card has fallen and place that heap between the other two and proceed as before. Again ask the question, again place the stack indicated in the middle and deal the third time. Ask for a third and last time which pile the chosen card is in, pick up that stack and deal off four cards. The *fifth* card will be the one chosen. Any number of cards may be used in performing this trick so long as the number is odd and a multiple of three. For example, if 33 cards had been used, each stack would have held 11 cards and the sixth card would have been the one chosen.

(2) Deal any number of cards face-up and keep in mind the first card dealt. Ask several persons each to note a card and to remember the number at which it falls. When all the cards have been dealt, take them up without disturbing their order and turn them face-down

audience's attention away from the fact that the trick is performed mathematically, in your patter you should be laying great stress on the assertion that it *isn't*. To make this the more impressive, turn your back and invite the spectators to take as many of the remaining cards as they please and place them either above or below the cards you have dealt. Then allow them to cut (not shuffle) the stack as many times as they wish. Now ask each one the number at which his chosen card fell, and when you have their answers deal the cards again face-up. When your original *first* card appears, take it as number one and count on silently to each number mentioned and at these numbers the noted cards will appear. In case all the cards are dealt out before the required number is reached, turn the cards over again and continue counting from the top of the pack until it is.

Two Methods of Disclosure: Cards discovered for an audience through the two methods just described need not be disclosed to them forthwith. Either of the following methods of disclosure will make fitting climaxes to the card discovery tricks.

(1) Having found the chosen card, do not reveal it. Instead get it to the top of the pack and give the pack to some person to hold. Arrange it in his hand so that the cards are face-up (thus placing the chosen card on the bottom) and so that his fingers will extend *under* the pack about an inch and his thumb *over* the pack about a half inch. Then, requesting the holder to nip the cards slightly, give in one stack. Meanwhile, in order to draw your

them a smart downward blow with your forefinger. This will knock all the cards out of his hands with the exception of the lowest card, which is the chosen one. This, retained by the greater friction of his fingers, will stare up alone, providing little less than a marvelous finish for the onlookers. If you are likely to have difficulty in finding a holder intelligent enough to follow your instructions, however, it will be better for you to hold the cards yourself, following the above instructions, and allow another person to rap the cards. Should you act as holder, moisten your fingers slightly. This will increase the tenacity of your hold on the bottom card and will preclude any botching of the trick.

(2) Get the card you wish to reveal to the top as before. Hold the pack lengthways, face-down, in the right hand some two feet above the table. Slip the top card over to make it project its entire length about an inch beyond the other cards. Let the pack fall and the air resistance will cause the chosen card to turn neatly over in the fall while the others will remain face-down. Care must be taken not to slam the pack. Let it fall gently and the desired result will be accomplished.

A Conclave of Kings: Extract the four kings from the pack and secretly place behind the second one taken up two knaves. Now, having arranged the kings fan-wise in your right hand, exhibit them to your audience. The two knaves, hidden behind the second king, will not be visible, and the spectators will be satisfied that only four cards are held and that these are

four kings. Now draw the cards together, place them at the top of the deck and announce that you are about to distribute the four kings just shown through different parts of the pack. Take up the top card and exhibit it carelessly, since it is, indeed, a king. Place it at the bottom of the deck. Take the next card without troubling to show it (since it is a knave) and insert it in the pack about midway, and the next card in a similar way a trifle higher up. Both of these cards your audience supposes to be kings. Now take the fourth card, show its face nonchalantly, knowing that it is a king, and replace it at the top of the deck. In reality there are now three kings at the top and one king at the bottom, although the onlookers believe that they have seen the kings thoroughly distributed through the pack. Request one of the number to cut the cards, and reveal to them the fact that all the kings have come together again. Of course the audience may be allowed to examine the pack without fear of discovery on your part.

The Weight of the Suit: A bit of preliminary preparation of the cards is necessary for the performance of this trick. Get a pack of cards with glazed backs. These are easily and effectively marked by smudging each with a moistened finger. For diamonds, moisten one edge; for clubs, moisten the corner; for spades, moisten the center; and the hearts need no mark. When the cards have dried an oblique glance will show that the surface is dull wherever moisture has been applied, although no marking will be apparent to the careless

observer. The cards are now handed out for shuffling. Before they are returned, announce that you will receive the cards back, one by one, and that you will determine the suit of each *by its weight*. As you take a card, face-down, balance it for a moment in your hand as if to estimate its weight, but in reality to get a side-wise glance at its back and to describe it as the mark shows. If it has no mark, you will recognize it for a heart. In case your audience should suspect that the cards are marked, allow them to examine the hearts to their heart's content, since this suit bears no mark.

A Mysterious Catch: Place two chosen cards at the top and bottom of the deck respectively. Now hold the deck in your right hand between the fingers and thumb, which you have previously moistened. Press the cards, make a swift movement upward with your arm, and loosen the pressure of the fingers. All the cards between the two chosen ones will be released and will fly into the air. Now close your fingers and thumb holding the two chosen cards and make a *rapid* dash with your hand into the cloud of flying cards as if to catch the two cards you want. Now show the two cards, which have been in your hand all the while, but which apparently have flown off with the others and have been plucked back from the confusion of the scattered deck. The illusion is baffling though simple. However, the trick should be practiced in private several times to acquire the necessary rapidity of movement.

The Magic Twins: Deal face-up 20 cards in pairs, and request your spectators each to select one or more pairs and remember their cards. Using care not to separate the pairs, take up the cards in any order, and replace them, again face-up, in four rows of five cards each. Now announce that you will tell which were the pairs selected by various persons. To enable you to accomplish this feat you have but to memorize four words: *mutus, nomen, dedit, cocis*. These words contains 20 letters (one for each card) but only 10 different letters. That is, there are two *m*'s, two *n*'s, two *t*'s, and so on. These words should be entablatured on the mind in the following order:

M	U	T	U	S
N	O	M	E	N
D	E	D	I	T
C	O	C	I	S

Practice with this table until you have memorized so perfectly that you can visualize it before you attempt performing the "Magic Twins." Place the first card on the *m* in *mutus*, and the second card of the same pair on the *m* in *nomen*; the third card on the *u* in *mutus*, and the fourth card on the second *u*; the fifth card on *t* in *mutus*, its companion on *t* in *dedit*; the seventh card should cover the *s* of *mutus*, and its mate the *s* of *cocis*—on this imaginary tablet you see on the table before you in your mind's eye. The first line is now covered; proceed in a like manner with *nomen* and with *dedit* and with *cocis* until the words you have visualized are completely covered. Now ask the spectators who have chosen cards which

row, or rows, they are to be found in. If one says that his are both in the top row, you will know that his cards cover the two *u*'s in *mutus* and you can point them out to him. If another states that his are in the first and third rows, you will know at once his cards cover the *t*'s and so on. Although some effort is necessary before this trick can be mastered, once you have mystified your friends with it you will realize that it has been worth the trouble.

Coloring the Pack: Secretly separate all the red suits from the black suits. Then take the two packs and slightly bend the reds lengthways, the black broadways. Now both colors may be distinguished by these, to the casual observer, imperceptible creases in the backs. Shuffle the cards thoroughly, announcing to your audience that you have only to name the color you wish to turn up as you deal and turn up that color at will. Thus, conveniently confusing cause for effect for the sake of your illusion, you can easily observe the direction of the secret crease before the card is dealt and name the color of it before you have seen its face.

The Mistaken Magician: Offer the deck to an onlooker and allow him to draw a card. Then hold the cards behind you and tell him to place the card he has drawn on the top of the deck. Snap the cards furiously as though you were shuffling them, but in reality only turn over the card which he has replaced, keeping it on top, however. Its back will now be toward the others. Hold out the cards with their faces toward the spectator, and ask him if the card

exposed is the one he drew. Meanwhile take your time in observing what the card actually is, since you have reversed it and its face is staring at you even as you ask him the question. Of course he will triumphantly deny that the card you have shown him is the one he chose. Again place the cards behind you and begin shuffling, albeit somewhat laboriously this time, as though you were having a hard time of it in such a strained position. "Here, let me shuffle them!" he will probably say. At any rate get the cards into his hands and allow him to shuffle them as much as he likes. Then take the cards back, shuffle them over until you secretly find the card he chose (since you have discovered what it was when you asked the first question) and place it at the bottom of the pack. Now pass the deck behind you once more, ruffle the cards once or twice, look much perplexed and finally bring out his card exposed at the bottom of the deck.

The Mystic Twenty-seven: For the successful completion of this trick the following table must be committed to memory. Or, it may be jotted down on a small card and a glance will reassure you as to the key:

1	131	10	132	19	133
2	231	11	232	20	233
3	331	12	332	21	333
4	121	13	122	22	123
5	221	14	222	23	223
6	321	15	322	24	323
7	111	16	112	25	113
8	211	17	212	26	213
9	311	18	312	27	313

Take any 27 cards you wish from the deck, and allow your audience to shuffle and examine them. When they are returned proffer the pack, face-down, to someone, requesting him to select a card, and as you deal them face-up into three stacks to note which group it falls in. Each heap will consist of nine cards. Ask which group the selected card has fallen in, and when you have your answer announce to the audience that you are going to allow whoever cares to do so to name any number from one to 27, and you will discover the secretly selected card at any number so named. Suppose 13 is mentioned by someone. You have only to refer to the table for your key, which in such a case would be 122. Take up the stacks again and place the one which contains the selected card *first* or uppermost. Deal the cards regularly in heaps of nine again, and ask again which stack contains the chosen card. Having your answer, again take up the cards, this time placing the pile including the selected card *second* or between the other two. (You follow, of course, the key discovered in the number opposite 13; *i.e.*, 1-2-2). Deal as before, and follow the procedure of asking in which pile the chosen card has fallen. Take up the cards for the last time, again placing the stack which has the secret card *second* or between the other two. Now, counting from the top, deal off 13 cards and the thirteenth will be the card chosen. In case seven had been the number at which you were asked to find the card, you should have discovered the key to be 1-1-1 and, following that, should have placed the

indicated pack *first* or uppermost each three times you dealt the cards. The ingenious trickster will find many variations to this trick that might easily be classified as separate feats of magic.

The Royal Assembly: Select all the court cards in a deck and arrange them, face-up, in three rows of four each, using care to place only one of each suit in a line, and to start the next line with the same suit the one above left off with. Tell your audience that you are going to reunite the different royal families. Now start taking up the cards longways, beginning at the bottom right-hand corner, next taking up the card just above, and so on. When that row of three is taken up, go back to the bottom of the next row and begin again, always making sure that the cards are kept in the order in which they have been arranged. When all the cards have thus been picked up, deal them one at a time in four heaps, face-down. Then ask an observer to examine the four heaps and find that the members of the royal families have reassembled in unbroken suits.

COIN TRICKS

A large number of card tricks rely entirely upon the mathematically accurate workings of a formula for their amusing results. No such thing is true of tricks with coins. Here either sleight-of-hand must be employed, or some preliminary preparation is necessary. Therefore, in an effort to avoid tricks which require long and tedious practice before the entertainer can become proficient at them, I have selected the following coin tricks, none of which requires practice at sleight-of-hand for its mastery, but all of which require some arrangement on the part of the conjurer before the trick is performed. However, every person who knows what spice the variety of a few coin tricks can add to an evening's entertainment will readily see that these few simple preparations are not out of proportion to the entertainment value.

The Disappearing Dime: Get an elastic cord about 12 inches in length and a dime with a hole in its edge. Tie the dime to the elastic with a piece of white silk thread, and sew the other end of the rubber cord to the lining of your left coat sleeve so that, without being stretched, it will allow the coin to dangle about an inch within the cuff. It is better if the cloth covering of the elastic cord matches in color the material of the coat. Having prepared thus for your trick, bring the dime down with the right hand and place it in your left

hand, holding it between your thumb and first finger. Now throw a handkerchief over the coin and ask one of your spectators to hold it thus covered for you. As he starts to take it release the dime, which, drawn by the elastic, will fly back up your sleeve. He will grasp the empty handkerchief. If the elastic cord is of a color to match your coat it is not likely to be discovered.

The Dissolving Quarter: Go to a paint shop or wherever window glass is sold and have cut for you a glass disk the exact circumference and thickness of a 25-cent piece. Now proceed with the preparation above described, using a quarter instead of a dime. Also procure a small wine glass of sufficient size for a quarter to drop easily but snugly into it. Fill this with water. Now, when you place the handkerchief over the quarter you are holding in your left hand, have the glass disk concealed in it. Release the quarter and grasp the glass disk instead. Ask someone to hold this over the wine glass. The audience will not be aware of the substitution, and will suppose that the quarter is still being held. Now request the holder to drop the coin as you strike it. Give the covered disk a gentle rap with your finger, exclaiming "Presto!" The tinkle of the coin dropping in the glass will be heard distinctly, but when the handkerchief is removed, the glass will be shown to contain nothing but water. The water may be poured out without fear of displacing the glass disk, because the vacuum cup in the bottom of the wine glass will hold it firmly. It is best, however, to have

the disk cut from high grade glass, since ordinary window glass will show a blue-green rim in the bottom of the container. The clever performer can easily explain this, though, by saying that it is the residue left by the dissolving coin.

The Vanishing Half: From your druggist procure a round pill box into which a half-dollar will fit snugly but easily. Line this box with dark red paper. Now get two 50-cent pieces of the same date and of similar appearance. Mark these identically and conceal one some place in the room where you are to perform. On one side of the other paste the same paper that you have lined the box with so that when the coin lies in the box with this side up it will appear to be the bottom of the box. You are now ready for the trick. Having exhibited the uncovered face of your prepared coin to your audience, place it face down in the pill box, taking care not to let anyone see the covered side as you do so. Now replace the box's lid, everyone being sure that they have seen the half-dollar placed in the box. Shake the box up and down vigorously and the coin will be heard to rattle on the inside. Now exclaim "Presto! Change!" and continue to shake the box, but from side to side this time and not up and down. Since the coin fits closely, no sound will be made to betray its presence in the box. To prove that the coin has indeed vanished, take off the lid and display the apparently empty interior to your onlookers, the paper cover concealing the half-dollar. Now direct the attention of the audience to the

place where you have previously hidden the other coin, and while they are looking, slip the paper-covered half-dollar out of the box, conceal it, and offer the box for inspection. By this time the first coin will have been discovered, and it will appear that you have caused the coin placed in the box to vanish and reappear in this new place.

The Multiplying Coin: Get three nickels of the same date and identical appearance. Secretly stick two of them with wax to the underside of the table you are to use in your performance. Place them about a half an inch from the edge and about one foot apart. In doing the trick, pass one of the nickels around for examination, and announce to the company that you are about to show them how to double, even triple their money in a few moments of financial operation. Receive the coin back, toss back the table cover, and begin to rub the under edge of the table with the coin. Go faster and faster, and at last exclaim, "It's about done!" Then, quickly withdrawing your hand, bring with it one of the concealed nickels. Display them to your audience, pocket the waxed coin, and repeat the operation just described. To do this more than twice is not feasible, since the spectators will grow suspicious and want to look under the table.

The Talking Quarter: Having borrowed a quarter from the audience, you make a few mysterious motions over it, drop it in a glass where it begins to hop up and down as if bewitched. You then explain to the company that you have succeeded in mesmerizing the

coin, and that it is now possessed with oracular powers. It will answer any question, you announce, by giving two jumps for "Yes" and one jump for "No." The explanation is that the borrowed coin has been secretly attached to a long black silk thread which is controlled by an accomplice concealed behind the table or under it, or some place out of the audience's sight. The trick is prepared for in this fashion: At one end of the black silk thread have attached a small pellet of wax. On the table cover, which should be of some dark material which will provide a sympathetic background for the thread, attach two or three ordinary dress eyes through which the thread must be strung. These should be placed in such a way so that the thread will be held in place on the side of the glass furthest away from the spectators. Now, having returned to the table with the borrowed coin, hand the glass to someone to pass around for inspection. As this is being done, with your left side turned to the audience and standing in front of the table, secretly take up the thread with the pellet of wax attached. Now take back the glass and take care to set it on the table in line with the thread. With your left side still turned to the audience, hold up the borrowed coin and call attention to the fact that the borrowed quarter and no other is being used. This said, with an easy, natural movement, transfer the quarter to your right hand and at the same moment press it against the wax and drop it into the glass. Now your concealed confederate must take up his work.

As soon as he hears the coin clink in the glass he must make the thread taut so that it will be perpendicular along the side of the glass and so invisible. He must also use care not to yank the thread so hard that the wax will be jerked loose. A gentle pull will serve better than a hard one. Any question which can be answered with a "Yes" or a "No" may be asked this "talking" quarter. Of course a great deal depends on the cleverness of the performer. For instance, if the coin is asked, "Does Mr. X wear a yellow undershirt?" and the conjurer finds that that question causes some amusement, he can easily direct similar questions concerning various other members of the company.

Mysterious Addition: This coin trick requires no preliminary preparation at all, because it depends for its mystifying result on a simple mathematical principle. A handful of coppers is taken up by the performer, and some person in the audience takes another handful. Now ask that person to privately count his coins and find out whether the number is even or odd, keeping the result a secret. Now call the attention of the audience to the fact that, although you have not asked him a single question and have no idea whether the number of coins he holds is even or odd, you can, none the less, divine the result of his secret count. In proof of this agree to take a number of coins and add them to those he has taken. Then, you say, if his number was odd, you will by your addition make the number even (without having known beforehand whether the

number was even or odd). And, if his number was even, you will by your addition make it odd. Have someone hold a hat high up and ask the other holder of coins to dump his coins into the hat, and you, at the same time toss yours in. Now the other person is asked to tell whether the number he held was odd or even; and, whatever his reply, when the coins are counted it will be discovered that you, through the addition of your number, have made the result exactly the reverse. The secret of the trick lies in the fact that your addition must always be an *odd* number. It is an elementary arithmetical principle that when an odd number is added to an even number the result is odd; and when an odd number is added to an odd number, the result is even. Care should be taken not to make your addition any other than odd. The trick may be repeated time after time, and for all its childish simplicity, will baffle folk of more than ordinary perception.

A Floating Coin: Procure two foreign coins and have someone who has access to a metal turning lathe mortise them out into shells for you. Necessarily, the coins must be of the same denomination. Take the two shells thus made and solder them together, so that the coin is apparently solid. Now, as an after dinner trick, take the hollow coin from your pocket, place it easily and steadily on a finger bowl full of water, and your observers will be astonished to see the coin float. Any other person who tries to do the same trick with his own coin will see it sink immediately to

the bottom. Explain your feat by saying that only a person with the steadiest of nerves can place a coin so deftly that the elasticity of the water's surface will bear it up. That the liquid's surface will so support some light objects may be demonstrated with a pin or a needle. However, care must be taken not to let anyone else have your false coin, or you will, of course, be discovered. It may seem that undue trouble must be taken to prepare this trick, but once you have performed it, you will realize that it has been worth while.

The Bewitched Coin: Take from your pocket a half-dollar and announce to your audience that you have a peculiar affinity for the coin you hold: that when it is spun you can tell without seeing whether it falls heads or tails. Now allow yourself to be blindfolded and as you walk away to the other end of the room direct some person to spin the coin. As soon as it falls you immediately state with certainty which side has fallen uppermost. This feat may be repeated time after time with equally accurate results, although it may be well to purposely say the wrong side now and then in order to throw some of the more observant spectators off the trail. The coin, of course, is one which you have prepared beforehand. At the extreme edge of the half-dollar you must cut a little notch, which will cause a fine tooth of metal to project from that side of the coin (which is, for instance, the "heads" side.) Now when the coin thus prepared is spun on a bare table and goes down with its notched side uppermost, it will run down like

an ordinary coin and the sound it makes will be a continuous "whirr," growing fainter and fainter until it finally ceases altogether. But if the coin should fall with the notched side down, the fine point of metal will catch the surface, and the friction of this will reduce the spinning and the "whirr" to half its ordinary length. The coin will then fall with a peculiar "plop." A few moments of practice with a prepared coin will demonstrate the difference between the two sounds. This, however, is not so great as to be readily distinguishable by the unattentive ear. Since you will be listening for it, however, you will have no trouble in saying with certainty which side has fallen uppermost. Great care should be taken in your "patter" to lead the company to believe that you are guided in some way other than by sound, because once someone suspects that such is the case, he will listen and soon distinguish between the sounds the two sides make in falling. In doing the trick, you have only to remember that as the coin runs down slowly, the notched side has fallen uppermost; if it runs down quickly the unnotched side is showing.

The Penetrating Dime: This is an easy and entertaining trick which may be performed very well in connection with the "disappearing dime" described at the beginning of this chapter. After borrowing a dime from some person in your audience you exhibit a large ball of wool yarn and state that you are going to cause the dime to pass from your hand into the center of the yarn ball. The coin disappears from

your hand and in a few moments, with the audience looking on, it is worked out of the yarn ball. The preparation for the trick is simple. Out of a small strip of tin or cardboard a slide is made through which a dime will freely slip. This is inserted in a large, loosely wound ball of wool yarn. As you turn your back to the audience on your way back to your table, slip the borrowed coin into this slide. Now proceed with the dime disappearing trick as described before. The audience sees the coin vanish from between your thumb and forefinger. No sooner have you released the prepared dime than you catch up the yarn ball, which you have placed on the table, and begin to squeeze and knead it in order to extract the borrowed coin. Since the yarn has been loosely wound, the borrowed coin will soon be worked to the surface. The dime should be marked by some member of the audience before you secretly insert it in order to forego any doubt as to whether it is the original and not a substitute.

DICE AND DOMINO TRICKS

The Multiplying Dice: You show a small pill box and prove, to your audience's satisfaction, that it is perfectly empty. Then, after having placed two small dice in it, you replace the cover, make a few passes, and removing the lid show that the two dice have increased to four. To construct this clever pocket trick get two small round pill boxes of equal size and similar appearance. Glue these together bottom to bottom. If the boxes are very shallow they are less likely to excite suspicion. Place four small colored dice in one compartment and two dice of the same size and color in the other compartment. Now, in performing the trick, all you do is simply turn the box over. You can easily do this without being detected when you take the box up after making the mysterious passes. If the dice are glued to the bottoms of their respective compartments they are not so likely to be heard rattling, but the effectiveness of the trick will be lessened somewhat.

The Mathematical Crapshooter: Give one of your audience a pair of dice and ask him to toss them out on the table while you have your back turned. Request him then to choose one of the numbers thus exposed, to multiply by two, add five to the product, multiply this result by five, and at last add the number shown by the other die. When he has done this, ask him for the result of his calculating,

and, having heard it, tell him what numbers were shown by the thrown dice. What you do is simply subtract 25 from the amount he gave you. The two numbers of the remainder represent the two numbers the dice showed. In choosing a person to throw the dice, however, it is advisable to choose some person accurate at arithmetic!

The Changing Spots: Take up two dice and hold them between the thumb and forefinger. Now proceed with your patter about the leopard never changing its spots and about the magic dice that very frequently change theirs. Saying this, pass your free hand in front of the dice without touching them. When the faces are exposed to the audience once more you show that the spots have changed. You have accomplished this by shifting the faces with a slight twisting movement between the thumb and forefinger. A little practice will show you how easily this can be done. The trick can be varied by arranging the exposed faces and decreasing or increasing the number of spots shown. But the trick will not serve for more than a brief diversion, because your spectators are likely to divine the secret.

The Mystic Ends: In performing this simple, yet baffling little domino trick, you leave the room, allow the audience to arrange the dominoes by matching them as they should according to the rules of the game, and when this has been done you announce from the other room what the two end numbers of the row are. The secret is that you have filched one of the dominoes and carried it with you. From

this you read the two numbers shown and these will coincide with the end numbers of the row. Precaution should be taken not to carry away a blank or a double, however. To heighten interest, the dominoes might be arranged while you are absent and then turned face downward. This having been done, you could return, announce the two numbers and when the two dominoes were turned up you would be shown to be right to the amazement of the company.

The Clairvoyant Domino: Having laid 20 dominoes face-down on the table, announce that you are developing a clairvoyant power, and that this power is now strong enough to allow you to do a very difficult feat: any number of dominoes may be taken from the right end of the row you have put down and placed on the left end while you are out of the room, and on returning you will name the number thus moved. Warn your friends, however, that this faculty is not yet sufficiently developed for you to divine a number larger than 12, and that for this reason they should not shift a larger number. On returning to the room, instead of announcing the number forthwith, you simply turn up a domino and the total number of points on it will be the number of dominoes changed. The secret of the trick lies in the way you have originally arranged the dominoes. Lay them so that the dots on the first total 12. This one is placed on the left end. The dots on the next one to it should total 11; on the next ten; on the fourth nine, and so on to the thirteenth, which should be a double blank. No particular selection need be made for the

remaining seven. Now, in completing the trick, count the dominoes from right to left up to the eighth, and the total of dots on the eighth domino will be the number of dominoes shifted.

The Magnetic Dice: Two small dice are passed around among the audience for inspection. You take them back and place them on the table, one on top of the other. Now, when the top die is lifted, the lower die is carried along with it. You may explain this adherence to your spectators by saying that the dice are magnetized, but the true explanation is that as you returned to your table after taking the dice back, you moistened a face on one die with a bit of saliva. When you set the dice down, one on top of the other, the moistened face of the one was pressed against the top face of the other. The two now become temporarily cemented together. They may later be taken apart, the moisture rubbed off, and both returned to the audience for re-examination.

HANDKERCHIEF TRICKS

Handkerchiefs readily lend themselves as a medium for the amateur magician, not only because they are familiar objects which everyone does, or should, carry, but because so very little pure sleight of hand is required in accomplishing amazing results with them. Two contrivances which professional magicians frequently use—the *spider* and the *pear*—will be found adaptable to the amateur's needs. These two devices are used in the production and vanishing of handkerchiefs: the spider, a small receptacle clipped to the fleshy part of the magician's palm by a spring clip; the pear, a bell-shaped, black enameled holder attached to the performer's belt loop with an elastic cord. However, these are not necessary to the success of the following tricks.

The Incombustible Handkerchief: Borrow a handkerchief from some person in the audience and, stating that you are in need of an incombustible handkerchief for a fire trick, proceed to test it by drawing it across a candle flame. The testing, of course, will dismay the owner and amuse the others. But you will seem to have magical powers, indeed, because the handkerchief will not burn. The secret is found in the way the handkerchief is held over the flame. Grasp it by the two corners, and, holding it taut, bring it slowly upward at a slant across the flame of the candle. But *keep the motion constant*. An instant of pause will allow the fabric to scorch, although the cloth

may be drawn ever so slowly across the flame without injury. Also take care that the handkerchief is not perfumed. Do this as you receive it from the lender. All perfumes contain inflammable spirits, and these are likely to set the cloth ablaze as soon as it is brought in contact with the flame.

The Devil's Noserag: Many a mysterious vanishing and reappearance can be caused by the use of the Devil's Noserag. Coins, cards and rings disappear as if by magic once you have tossed His Satanic Majesty's Handkerchief over them. Empty hands are filled with dollar bills, colored ribbons and whatnot when they are covered with this piece of cloth. Naturally it is a piece of magical apparatus which you must construct beforehand. This is easily done by procuring two large bandanna handkerchiefs of identical appearance. These are stitched together at the edges, and in the middle of one a slit three or four inches in length is cut. This side you contrive never to let your audience see. When you wish to cause a borrowed ring, or some small object to vanish, you toss the magic handkerchief over it, allow it to pass through the slit, and then jerk the handkerchief away with a flourish. Or hand the covered object to some spectator, having already secretly passed it through the slit. Now take the handkerchief by a corner, ask the holder to let go and, shaking the handkerchief about, show the article to have vanished completely. A dollar bill, or a handful of parti-colored ribbons may be produced by previously concealing them between the two handkerchiefs. When you are about to produce the

article, work it up toward the center of the handkerchief secretly, spread the cloth over your palm, and the instant before you jerk the handkerchief away, close up your hand to clutch the object. If ribbons are being used, precaution must be taken to have them well bunched so that they will not be left trailing out of the opening once the handkerchief is pulled away.

Handkerchief Knots: Two simple and yet effective handkerchief tricks are those of knotting a handkerchief without letting go the ends and knotting a handkerchief with one hand. To prove the difficulty of these feats, request some of your friends to try accomplishing either. To the uninitiated what you ask will appear impossible, and you have only to prove to them that your request is not only reasonable, but easily fulfilled. For the first, that of knotting a handkerchief without letting go the ends, provide yourself with a square of cloth the size of a tea towel. Now fold your arms so that your right hand will be placed *under* your left bicep, and your left hand will rest *over* your right bicep. With your arms thus folded, grasp a corner of the cloth with your left hand, and the corner diagonally opposite with your right. Unfold your arms. A knot will appear in the cloth, although the ends have not been released at any time during the operation. Tying a knot with one hand is quite as easily performed. Hold up one hand with its palm toward the audience. Across it drape a handkerchief diagonally folded. The middle rests between your thumb and forefinger. Now bring up the corner that

hangs *back* of your hand and catch it between your first two fingers. Grip the half of the handkerchief hanging in front of your hand so that its corner will protrude from the opposite end of your fist. Now shake the loop which has been formed gently down off the back of your hand. When it falls the knot is tied. Only a large handkerchief will make a freely working loop.

The Magic Billiard Ball: Taking up a handful of particolored handkerchiefs, pass through your audience and invite the company to choose one. Returning to your table you put down all the handkerchiefs except the one chosen. This you grasp with both hands, and, waving it gently up and down, you cause it to disappear, to be replaced by a glass billiard ball of the same color. To prepare for this trick procure a hollow glass ball commonly used in ornamenting Christmas trees. Remove the wire attachment from this and with a safety razor blade scratch off all the gilt covering. This will leave a hollow and transparent glass ball. Now get six or seven handkerchiefs made of thin silk and of various solid colors. The glass ball should be concealed among these, and as the handkerchiefs are taken up to show the audience, you must secure the ball in your hands. It will be concealed by the mass of silk, and, since no one suspects what you are about to do, will not be detected. Now, having returned to the table, put down all the handkerchiefs except the one selected and retain the glass ball between your two hands. You have then only to stuff the colored handkerchief

gradually into the glass ball as you gently wave it up and down. When you have at last caused the handkerchief to disappear into the cup your clasped hands form, take away your right hand, pick the glass ball out of your left, and holding it between thumb and finger, with your thumb over the opening, exhibit it to your audience. Take care to judge the capacity of the ball, however, because it will be very fragile, and too large a handkerchief will crack it. Thin silk may be crushed to a surprisingly small compass though, and a silk handkerchief 18 inches square should work easily into a medium-sized glass ball.

Dyeing the Handkerchief: Wave a large green silk handkerchief out before your spectators, and allow it to flutter gently down over your left hand which you have doubled into a fist. With the tip of your right hand's index finger you gradually push the green handkerchief down through your clutched fist until, passing through, it begins to emerge a *brilliant red*. Quickly pulling it clear you amaze your audience by showing a handkerchief colored entirely red. At the same moment, the left hand, which the company may suspect of containing something, is opened and shown empty. Four squares of thin silk are used in preparing for this trick. Two are colored red and two are colored green. Their dimensions should be about 18 inches square. Stitch the four together all around the edges, placing the two green squares between the two red ones. Trim away at the seams any threads that may betray the concealed color. Then in one side make

a slit four inches long through two thicknesses and stitch the edges of it together. Now, in performing the trick, when the handkerchief flutters down over your fist, take care that the slit falls undermost. Pushing the handkerchief down into your tightly doubled hand, you start the red side through the green side (or vice versa) and simply turn the handkerchief wrong side out in pulling it through your hand. The additional thickness of the handkerchief will not be noticeable if sheer silks are used. However, the advice about the position of lights made in the introduction should be kept in mind. Only the darkest shades of red and green are suitable for the trick.

Houdini's Handkerchief Wrapper: This is the method of so wrapping a coin in a handkerchief that it appears to be held tight and fast, while as a matter of fact it is simply covered by an outer fold of the cloth. It has been employed with success by that incomparable modern trickster, Houdini. Take the coin between the thumb and forefinger of the left hand, holding it vertically. Drop a handkerchief over it. Now cease your patter a moment to exclaim that someone may suspect that the coin has been changed and that you will allay any such suspicion by showing that it has not been. Now grasp the handkerchief covered coin between the index and second fingers of the right hand, scissor-wise, the hand being *held palm upward*. Secretly release the coin with the thumb and finger of the left hand, but hold them in position under the handkerchief. Still holding the coin between the fingers of the

right hand, turn the hand over toward yourself with a natural movement. Then grasp the coin once more in the left hand, but this time through the *doubled fold of cloth* which the turning of your hand formed. Now exclaim, "Presto!" turn back the edge of the handkerchief and display the coin to your audience. Apparently it has passed from your bare fingers through the cloth and now rests on the outside. A quarter will prove most adaptable to this trick, smaller and larger coins being more difficult to grasp. Practice it with the above instructions to be sure you have it perfectly clear before you perform it in public.

The Mesmerized Napkin: Borrow for the occasion a table napkin, or, better, a white silk handkerchief. Make a mysterious knot in one corner, which, you may explain to your audience, is a magic knot, taught to you by a Hindu faker. Now request some slow music from the professor at the piano, or ask someone to start a jazz record on the phonograph. No sooner does the music start than the magically knotted handkerchief, which meantime you have let fall to the floor, begins to dance about, slowly or furiously, depending on the kind of music. You place your hands in your pockets, move up and down, and in various other ways demonstrate to the audience that you have no mechanical control over it. At last, having danced several minutes, the bewitched handkerchief leaps high into the air, you catch it, untie the knot and return it to the lender. At least one, and possibly two assistants must be employed

when you perform this trick. A long black thread, until the exact moment for the trick, has been allowed to lie loosely on the floor. If it is convenient, the two confederates may be concealed in other rooms at both ends of the thread. When you return to your place with the borrowed handkerchief, they pull the thread taut, bringing it to a level with your waist. You then knot the handkerchief to the thread, pretending merely to tie a magic knot, and they relax the hold enough to let the handkerchief drop to the floor. Once the music starts, however, they again tighten the stretched thread, and cause the handkerchief to dance to the music. At the end, when the novelty has begun to pass, you make a secret sign, and they give a jerk, tossing the handkerchief high up. When you catch it to untie the knot, one releases his hold, and the other pulls in the thread while you are fumbling until it is clear of the knot. If it is practicable to use only one confederate, then tie one end of the thread to a leg of the table you use. In such case, the thread must be broken, or your own handkerchief must be used.

The Egg-Laying Bandanna: You borrow a felt or derby hat from the audience. Then, producing a large red bandanna handkerchief, you proceed to shake it out, fold it, beat it, and prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that it is absolutely empty. Taking it up in a single fold, right corner to right corner, left corner to left corner, you shake from it a large hen egg. Again showing the bandanna to be empty you shake out another egg. The feat is repeated

until half a dozen eggs have been produced. Each time the handkerchief is shown to be empty. Now, replacing the bandanna in your pocket, you pick up the hat and show the audience that all the eggs have vanished. The accessories needed are: a large bandanna handkerchief, a bent pin, a nest egg, a strong black thread, a tack, and a hat of some depth. The nest egg should be of wood or composition. One may be bought at any five and ten cent store. The thread should lack a few inches of being as long as the bandanna, and the larger the latter is the better. Attach the thread to the nest egg with the tack, and paint the head white so that it will not be noticeable. In borrowing the hat get a black one; a derby, if one is available. The free end of the thread must be attached to one edge of the handkerchief at an equal distance from both corners. This may be done with a bent pin at the time of your performance, or it may be sewed on privately, either of which you may find advisable. Should the first method be used, the handkerchief may be passed around for inspection at the start, and you must secretly hook the pin in an edge before doing the trick. Should you decide to sew it on beforehand and forego being caught in a false movement, you cannot allow the bandanna to get out of your possession. In performing the trick, first borrow a hat. Produce the handkerchief and secretly allow the egg to drop down into the hat. There it remains concealed while you shake and beat the handkerchief. Now allow the bandanna to slip out of your hands and fall

down over the derby. As you pick it up, instead of grasping the two corners you first held, catch the bottom two. When you hold it up the egg will be left dangling by the thread, but concealed behind the handkerchief. Now bring the two top corners together, hold them in your left hand, and with your right hand catch the bottom corners together. Holding the folded handkerchief longways thus, bring your right hand to a level with your left hand. The egg is now lying in the fold, still concealed. Holding what was the top edge of the bandanna a few inches above the hat, tilt the handkerchief slightly, shake it gently and allow the egg to roll out into the hat. Now again drop the handkerchief over the hat, take up the two corners of the edge opposite the one the egg is attached to, and allowing the egg to remain in the hat for the time being, again prove the handkerchief empty. Having done this, again let go and repeat the movement of taking hold the two corners of the edge that the thread is held by. Catch the bandanna in a fold as described before, and shake the egg out into the hat once more. The process can be repeated until the audience has seen, apparently, six or seven eggs roll into the hat. Then fold up the handkerchief, put it in your pocket, and show them that the eggs have vanished. The amusing effect of this "egg-laying" trick can be heightened materially by memorizing the patter written for it and printed in the introduction of this book. So performed it never fails to bring laughter and applause. Patter, however, will brighten any trick quite as much.

MISCELLANEOUS TRICKS

No particular attention has been paid to the matter of grouping in this division. Only those tricks and illusions which could have been included under the four previous headings will be found missing, insofar as variety is concerned. However, the same policy of selecting only those tricks which can be adapted easily by the amateur entertainer has been preserved.

The Hydrostatic Tumbler: Get a glass tumbler, a dinner plate and a piece of tissue paper. Pour water in the plate until it comes up within a half an inch of the rim. Crumple the tissue paper slightly, and, placing it in the glass, set it on fire. When the last flame disappears, quickly turn the glass upside down into the plateful of water. A natural law accounts for the result: the water rushes swiftly up into the upturned glass. Your audience has seen that water can be placed in a glass while the latter is upside down. Firmly holding the glass and plate, reverse their positions, and hold out the tumbler of water—filled from the bottom up. Several drops of wood alcohol ignited in the glass will produce the same result.

Hindu Paper Bands: Taking up three strips of paper and a tube of library paste you make three paper bands or rings while your audience looks on. Then, making an incision lengthwise in one of the bands, begin to cut around the entire circumference and continue until the first ring naturally falls into two

separate ones. Take up the second band, repeat the cutting, with the more surprising result when you have finished of having two interlinked paper rings instead of two separate hoops. Only by breaking one of the bands can these be taken apart. Now pick up the third hoop, and cut it as you did the others. This one, however, will fall, not into separate or interlinked bands, but into one large hoop twice the size of the original band. To produce this trick you have only to procure strips of paper some two feet long and about an inch in width. The first band is a simple hoop, made by pasting two ends of a strip together. The second is twisted twice before the ends are joined, and the third is given but a single twist before its two ends are fastened. After the trick has been performed, the bands may be passed around among the audience for examination.

The Dry Hand: From your pharmacist buy an ounce of lycopodium. Sprinkle some of this over the surface of a panful of water. Now request one of your spectators to drop a coin into the pan, announcing at the same moment that you will contrive to pick it out without getting your hand wet. When the person has complied with your request, plunge your hand into the water and pick up the coin. The powder adheres to the skin and prevents your hand from getting wet. Withdrawing your hand give it a slight shake to dislodge the powder, and show it perfectly dry to your audience.

A Watch Trick: This trick, founded on a

simple arithmetical principle, will cause some amazement in any company not familiar with the secret. Someone in your audience is requested to think of any one of the 12 hours. You announce that you are going to call your clairvoyant power into action and divine the number thought of. Now taking in your hand a watch, you ask the person who has selected an hour in his mind to follow you as you tap the hour numbers on the watch dial, and at the first tap to count mentally the hour after that one he selected, at the second, the number of the hour after that, and so on. In case he thought of three o'clock, at the next tap he should count "Four," the next "Five" thus and so. Only, reaching the number 20 in his count, he is instructed to say "Stop!" When he does so your pencil will be pointed to the hour thought of. The eighth tap is the key to the mystery. The first seven may be ignored, but place the eighth tap on the figure twelve and continue backward around the dial—11, ten, nine and so on. When finally you are told to halt your pencil will rest on the chosen hour. If the count is made accurately, it cannot be otherwise.

The Chinese Balls: At a five and ten cent store, or a place where toys are sold, buy three large wooden beads of different colors. With a gimlet enlarge the holes through them to the size of an ordinary lead pencil. Now get two lengths of strong linen tape, each ten feet long and about three-quarters of an inch wide. Double each tape exactly so that they will now measure five feet in length. Insert the folded

end of one into one of the wooden balls and pull about an inch of it through, forming a loop with the doubled tape. In the loop so formed insert an inch of the folded end of the other length of tape and carefully draw the ball back over the joint of the two. Now you will find that the two tapes are firmly connected, and that the point of connection is completely hidden in the ball. Thread a second ball on one of the tapes and draw it down until it reaches the first ball. Do the same thing on the other tape with the third ball. Now the three balls are threaded on the two tapes, the center ball conceals the connection and apparently the three wooden beads are strung on two lengths of tape in an ordinary way. The trick is now completely prepared for. Show the balls so strung to the audience, and request two persons to hold the two ends of tape allowing plenty of slack for the beads to swing freely.

Slide the two outer balls back and forth on the strings to dispel any suspicion. Now ask each holder to drop one end of his tape, explaining that you are about to knot them and tie the balls on the strings so that they cannot be unthreaded without the use of magic. When they have complied with your request, make a single tie with the two ends released, and return the ends to the holders, but take care that each receives the end which he *did not hold before*.

Now request the two volunteers to pull gently and gradually on their ends of the tape until it becomes taut. Meanwhile you toss a handkerchief over the three beads, and, repeating your favorite magic formula, give them two or

three smart raps with the edge of your hand. To the amazement of the spectators, the beads will fall to the floor, while the tapes, still held firmly by the assistants will remain unbroken and uninjured.

The Ribbon Mill: To prepare for this trick, heap several handfuls of bran up on a dinner plate. Either the breakfast food variety of bran or ordinary mill-run will serve. At the bottom of the heaped bran conceal three or four tightly wound rolls of narrow silk ribbons. These should be of various brilliant colors. Two or three yards can be made into a very small roll. Now, beginning the trick, you set the plate of bran before you, take up a handful and begin to chew it. With your other hand take some, this time managing secretly to take up and convey a couple of the ribbon rolls to your mouth. If you do not care to swallow the bran, this hand can bring away the moist lump while the other is bringing up more bran and the other two rolls of ribbon. Now work your jaws awhile as if chewing, and at last begin to look very pained. Apparently your digestive system is beginning to bother you. Now push a ribbon ball down to the front of your mouth, place both hands up over the lower part of your face, secure a ribbon end, and begin to wind it, yard after yard, out on your wrists. Do this winding slowly and deliberately as if you were pulling the ribbon up out of your stomach and the effect will be heightened. Hold the ball you are unwinding back of your front teeth, allowing only enough room for the ribbon to pass through freely. When the first

ball is unwound, push up another with your tongue. You will find that the ribbon thus unrolled will occupy such an amazing amount of space your audience will never suspect that it could have been compressed so tightly as to have been secretly taken up with the bran.

The Bent Watch: Selecting one of your audience whom you know to be the owner of a valuable watch, you request that the time-piece be loaned to you for a few moments. Once you have it in your hands you take it between your fingers, remark the softness of its metal and begin bending it slowly back and forth between your two hands. This trick is simply an optical delusion, but, cleverly carried out, it can be made a very amusing one before any audience because the watch owner's uneasiness at seeing such treatment given his valuable possession will always help the performance. As you take the watch, hold it for a moment, and gaze at it with increasing astonishment. Then hold it up between your hands with its back toward the audience. Place the thumb of each hand on the dial and the tips of each hand's fingers on the back. The stem of the watch is now pointing straight up. Now, bending the hands slowly outward, at the same moment shift your finger tips, bringing them closer together. Now quickly move them back to their first position near the edge. Repeat these movements indefinitely, or until the novelty of the trick begins to wear off. The deception depends on the shifting of light and shadow on the back of the watch case. This play of lights is caused by the movement of the finger

tips. Apparently the watch buckles out, is bent back into position, buckles out once more, and so on. At times, if the performer is deft in his movements, it may appear to the audience that the watch has been bent almost double. Care must be taken, however, not to grip the watch so tightly that it will be injured, or so loosely that it will be dropped, since the climax of the trick comes when you return the watch undamaged to its owner.

The Magic Liquor: You line three common tumblers up on the table before you and set out a transparent bottle filled with a wine-colored liquid. Announcing to the audience that the red liquid is a very rare magic wine, you start pouring it into the glasses. In the first glass the liquor is discovered to be, not red at all, but violet; in the second it assumes a yellowish, straw-tinted hue, in the third it is bluish-gray, slowly changing to black. The following chemicals, which may be bought from any druggist, are needed for this trick; logwood shavings, powdered alum and iron filings. Prepare the red liquid by placing the logwood shavings in a decanter of water. After a few hours the water will be colored red. Now wash and polish the three drinking glasses. The first needs no preparation at all, since when the red solution is poured from the bottle and comes into contact with the air it will change to a violet tint. Rinse the second glass with a solution of strong vinegar and iron filings and allow a small quantity to remain in the bottom. Dust a couple of pinches of powdered alum in this second glass. Neither it nor the vinegar

solution will then be apparent if the glass is brightly polished. The third and last glass is simply rinsed with strong vinegar.

The Magic Names: Requesting your audience to suggest the names of some former president of the United States you write them down on a sheet of paper. The papers on which the names are written you now place in a hat, and allow someone to choose one and show it to everyone except yourself. Then place this paper, crumpled up, in a small metal pan, set a match to it and wait until the flames have completely burned out. Meanwhile you have pulled up your coat sleeve and rolled back your shirt cuff. Now you pick up the ashes of the paper, rub them gently on your bare arm, and lo! the name of the president written down on the burned paper appears in black across your bare arm. In preparation for this trick you have only to write the name of a popular president across your arm, using a tooth pick as a pen and cow's milk as ink. Allow the milk to dry and roll down your sleeves to await the time for the trick. You may allow your audience to believe that they are making their own selection of a name to be written down, but in reality you simply write the same name on each slip of paper. If the name on your arm is a likely one, it is sure to be suggested by some person, because there will be a perfect bedlam of replies to your request. The name "Lincoln" is nearly always a good bet, but if your audience is one of high school freshmen anxious to parade their intelligence, you can count on some of the more obscure presidents being

named and so prepare. Write down the name selected and proceed to have a paper selected, which you finally burn. This selection merely adds to the effectiveness of the trick, for you have written the same name—the name on your arm—on all the papers. Now when you rub the ashes across your arm, the black char will adhere to the skin wherever the milk fat has dried. The ingenious entertainer will find many variations to this trick. Names of any persons or things may be used, of course, but since there have been only 29 presidents, there is a greater likelihood of someone suggesting the name you want to use.

The Vanishing Stamp: Get a metal salve box about the size of a dollar and with a sharp knife scrape all the lettering off of it. Now, with an old pair of scissors, cut out a circle of tin which will fit snugly down in the bottom of the box. Place a one-cent postage stamp on the true bottom of the box and keep the false bottom up in the lid while you are showing the box to your audience. Place the lid on, make several magic passes, announce that you have caused the stamp to vanish, and reopen the box to prove the truth of your statement. The false tin bottom, having dropped down out of the lid when you covered the box, will conceal the stamp. Since it fits snugly and has the same appearance that the real bottom has, no one will suspect what has actually occurred.

The Bewitched Spoons: You place three silver spoons out on your table, and announce that your clairvoyant power will allow you to tell which one of the three has been touched

while you are absent from the room. Request someone to touch any one of the spoons while you are away, and assure him that you will tell him which one he put his finger on, even though he does it so lightly as not to disarrange the spoon's position in the slightest degree. You retire, return when he gives the signal, and do as you predicted you would. The secret lies in the fact that you must have a confederate and a prearranged group of signals. For instance, if the right hand spoon was touched, he may make a natural movement with his hand and rub his chin as you reenter the room. You watch for this and say confidently which spoon the spectator touched. The signal for the second spoon could be standing with hands in pockets, for the third, biting the under lip. The only precaution to take is in selecting signals that will not be readily observed by other members of the audience.

Secret Writing Inks: The amateur with a spark of inventive genius can devise a large number of mystifying results through the use of secret writing inks. All of the ones here described may be made with chemicals procurable from any druggist.

(1) With water and sugar of lead make a writing solution. When a letter written with this has been allowed to dry, moisten the surface of the paper with diluted sulphurated hydrogen. A small sponge should be used for this process. Apply the dilution with a light touch. The invisible letters will appear with a metallic brilliancy.

(2) Write with a weak solution of oil of

vitrol. This must be greatly diluted, or the paper will be eaten away. Now, when the invisible letters so put down are exposed to a flame, the heat will cause the words to appear in a deep black.

(3) An excellent invisible ink is made with a solution of sulphate of iron. Letters so written should be moistened with a solution of nut-galls to restore the words.

(4) An invisible ink which can be restored to visibility, disappear again and again be restored and so on indefinitely, may be made by dissolving a small amount of sulphate of copper in a glass of water. Letters written with this solution are invisible, but no sooner is the paper moistened with ammonia than they reappear a brilliant blue. As soon as the ammonia evaporates they disappear once more, only to come back with renewed brilliance when the ammonia is applied again.

(5) Dissolve in diluted muriatic acid a small amount of cobalt. When heated the letters will become a beautiful bluish-green.

Not only are these inks adaptable to the amateur magician's performance, but they as readily recommend themselves to those persons who care to carry on a correspondence through chemical reaction. An intruder, of course, not having the secret formulas, or knowing the combinations used, could never get any knowledge of what was so written.

The Egg in a Bottle: Taking up a large hen egg, you exhibit it to your audience. Now a quart ketchup bottle, a pitcher of iced water and a funnel are placed on the table. Covering

the bottle with the handkerchief, you carry the egg under it, and working there with two hands for a few moments, you bring out your hands without the egg. The funnel is then placed in the bottle neck, and without the handkerchief cover having been removed, the iced water is poured through the cloth into the bottle. At last the handkerchief is withdrawn with a flourish, and the solid egg is seen at the bottom of the bottle. To accomplish this amazing feat the following preparation is necessary: Before your act soak the egg in strong vinegar. If the vinegar does not prove acetic enough, add one teaspoonful of strong acetic acid to every two tablespoonfuls of vinegar. After a few hours the shell of the egg will have become perfectly pliable, although the egg will retain its original shape and appearance. You are now ready for the trick. With your hands and the bottle completely concealed by the handkerchief, force the flexible egg through the narrow bottle neck. Now, before removing the cover, pour in the iced water. The cold water will cause the egg to resume its original shape. Then you have only to baffle your friends by displaying to them the curiosity.

A Sack Escape: The amateur performer may not find the following trick worth adding to his repertory, since it requires more preparation than the ordinary parlor illusion. It is an excellent one, though, and it may be put by for a time when pocket tricks have grown old, and the entertainer is seeking new worlds to conquer. A sack large enough to hold a small boy is shown around for examination. When it

is returned, a boy accomplice gets in, the mouth is gathered up, tied fast and sealed. Now a screen is placed in front of the boy, who is standing upright in the sealed sack. Presently he walks from behind the screen with the sack in his hands and shows the cords and seal unbroken and the sack uninjured. The explanation is that there are two sacks, both of them sound. One, however, is concealed up the back of the boy-assistant's coat while the other is being examined by the audience. When the boy gets in the sack, a committee is called up from the audience to see that everything is done properly and to place the seal on. As the boy gets in, he quickly takes the second sack from its hiding place, and, as if to aid in gathering up the top of the sack grasps it, at the same moment, passing the mouth of the second sack up into the mouth of the sack he is in. You take hold of this, gather the mouth of the outer sack about it, and leave the mouth of the second sack sticking out. Apparently it is the top of the outer sack, since you hold your hands about the folds. Now, having gathered up the two sack mouths, hand a cord to one of those from the audience and ask him to tie the sack while you hold it. Get a second person to tie on a cord, and a third, until the entire committee of spectators is convinced that there is not trickery insofar as the sack's being securely tied is concerned. Finally, a bit of sealing wax is produced and the knots are all coated with this. An impression in the wax is made with a borrowed signet ring. Then the screen is brought forward. The boy in the

sack, once concealed, has only to crawl out of the outer sack, which has never been tied, toss it out of sight, and walk out with the tied and sealed duplicate sack. In selecting your confederate, get a small boy who will quickly understand what is expected of him and will follow your instructions to the letter. The sacks should be made of some light material which can easily be folded to a small compass, and should, of course, be identical in appearance.

Sightless Reading: Seat yourself before a small table while an assistant distributes blank cards through the audience. The spectators are invited to write on these any words which may come into their minds. The cards so written on are collected in an envelope. Meanwhile you have introduced to the audience the girl or lady who is supposed to be possessed with clairvoyant power. You now give her your seat before the table, and, taking up a large white handkerchief, proceed to blindfold her. This is done in such a manner as to allow her secret downward glances at the table in front of her. The handkerchief, however is impenetrable. You now receive the cards from your assistant, take one of them from the envelope and hold it for a moment against the blindfold. The "clairvoyant" hesitates for an instant, and then reads the words written thereon, which, for example, are "A Pitiful Performance!" In a similar way another card is picked up and read, while the first card is tossed carelessly down on the table. The explanation is that the first words were not written on the

card at all. The "clairvoyant" has simply read anything she chose. What was really written on the card, let us say, was "Bravo!" But since no person in the audience knows what his neighbor has written, the first words can be fabricated in all confidence. Now, when the first card supposedly read through the bandage is tossed down on the table, the girl takes a sly downward glance at it and reads from it the name or words which the audience supposes written on the *second*, which is now being held before the blindfold. This is continued on through the collection, but you must take care to throw the cards on the table so that the written side will show each time. To prevent suspicion, an extra card should have been concealed in the envelope beforehand, and this, the last card taken out, must be read as the next to the last card directs.

PARLOR JUGGLING

Through the use of a few unpretentious devices the amateur magician may turn juggler when he will. True jugglers must devote years to acquiring their skill and dexterity. By obeying the following instructions you may equal some of their feats, and appear before your friends as an accomplished mountebank.

Spinning a Ball on a Parasol: A folded Japanese paper parasol is taken up, raised, and on the top a colored wooden ball is placed. The performer now sets the parasol spinning, and the wooden ball is kept rolling on the top. Sometimes it is jounced high into the air, but the juggler always succeeds in catching it on the whirling parasol. In preparation for this trick procure an oiled paper parasol like the ones which girls are wont to carry in the summer time. At the top end of this there will be a small button, or cap. For this make a stiff paper shell of the same color. Attach the wooden marble to this shell with a length of black silk thread. The length of the thread should be somewhat less than the radius of the raised parasol. After raising the parasol preliminary to performing the trick, slip the paper shell down over the cap at the top. After this is done, of course, you need have no fear of dropping the ball. Another ball, identical in appearance with the prepared one, may be introduced to further mystify your audience.

Balancing a Drinking Glass: An ordinary

thin glass drinking tumbler may be balanced on the edge of a playing card held upright in one hand, or, set on the table, it may be made to stand tilted at an angle of 35 or 40 degrees. No preparation is necessary for the first phase of this balancing trick. A playing card is simply held upright between the thumb and *second* finger of your left hand. The glass is picked up and set down on the top edge of the playing card, where it remains, seemingly balanced. As a matter of fact, your free forefinger, hidden behind the card, is brought up to support the tumbler. A playing card prepared by pasting a cardboard flap on the back side may be used, however. In such a case make a flap from light cardboard one-fourth the width of the playing card, and its entire length. When this flap is unfolded it forms a T with the card, and on this the glass is supported. For the second part of the trick the tumbler is filled with water. Previously a small match stick has been hidden under the linen table cloth. Now, with a great show of balancing the glass on its edge, you set it down over the concealed match stick. This done, the glass may be made to tilt at a sharp angle without any danger of its falling over.

Match and Matchbox Juggling: A number of seeming feats of equilibrium may be performed with the aid of matches and match-boxes. The so-called "safety" matches and match-boxes lend themselves best to the performer's needs. A match may be made to stand upright on a bare table surface simply by secretly moistening the stick end and by apply-

ing a steady force when it is set down. A match may be held upright on the thumb, apparently balanced, by bending the thumb down, and inserting the match in a wrinkle at the joint. When the thumb is straightened the match will be held firmly upright. A match box may be prepared by thrusting a thumb tack through its top from the under side. The performer pushes the match down on the protruding tack point, and the match stands upright, apparently balanced. A match-box which will always fall top side up when it is tossed can be made by inserting a five-cent piece between the sliding drawer and the bottom of the box. So weighted, the box will always fall flat and top side up. By bending your wrist and pinching a crease of skin between the drawer and the outside of a small wooden match box it is possible to fasten the box on your hand. When your wrist is straightened out the box will stand upright, to all appearances balanced. You may move your hand about as you will without fear of dislodging the box.

The Perpendicular Handkerchief: A white cotton handkerchief is shaken out, then twisted into a roll and balanced upright in the palm of the hand, or on the face. It stands rigidly perpendicular. The secret is that a thin wire—or an ordinary white pipe cleaner will serve—is concealed in one of the handkerchief's seams. When the cloth is untwisted and waved out, it is limp enough, but when it is twisted again the hidden wire gives it the necessary rigidity to make it stand upright.

The Clipped Envelope: The effect of this juggling trick is as follows: A sealed envelope is tossed into the air, and as it falls the juggler neatly clips off one end with a pair of scissors. He does this, apparently, without touching the envelope with his hands. To prepare for this effect procure two envelopes exactly alike. One is for the audience to examine and is secretly made away with before doing the trick. The other is clipped across one end beforehand, and the clipping is concealed by slipping it between the blades of the closed scissors. When the prepared envelope is tossed and falls, the scissors are plunged toward it, and as they open the clipping drops to the floor, producing the desired effect.

Balancing an Egg on End: Columbus is said to have accomplished this by smashing the egg down on a table. However, there is another method which will excite more interest. Place a teaspoonful of salt in the center of a dinner plate. In this small pile of salt stand the egg on one end. Now with a soft hair brush such as the ones used in water color painting, brush the salt gently away from the base of the egg. At last the egg is left standing upright without any visible support, although the truth is the few remaining grains of salt, unseen, keep it from toppling over.

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